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FOR THE

SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

AS THE

KING AND HEAD OF HIS OWN CHURCH.

In Two Sermons,

PREACHED IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, (OLD SCHOOL,)

Madison, Wis., March 18, 1860.

BY W. L. GREEN.

MADISON, WIS.:

ATWOOD, RUBLEE & REED, BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS.

1860.

Slavery question.

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NOTICE.

The subjoined paper was read from the pulpit of the Presbyterian church, Madison, Wis., by its pastor, on Sabbath, March 11th, 1860.

“At a meeting which wore a Missionary aspect, I took occasion on last Sabbath evening, briefly to express my matured opinion touching the righteousness of the course pursued by the Old School Presbyterian church in receiving slaveholders to the communion table.

It is my deliberate judgment that the courts of this church could not deviate from this course, without incurring the guilt of infringing Christ's prerogative as King over His own house, and themselves using tyranny over the Lord's flock.

I should feel dishonored in conscience, were I from this pulpit to attempt the discussion of slavery in its political aspects. But the question as to the validity of simple slaveholding as a bar to the communion table, is one which, as an officer in God's house, it becomes me to discuss. The question alluded to is, however, but one offshoot from an inquiry of the deepest range and widest import. I mean that which relates to the completeness of the doctrine and law of order authoritative in God's house. Upon this topic, crude opinions, destructive to the very foundations of the church, have in late days flooded some sections of the land.

I will therefore on next Sabbath, preach two sermons upon the following propositions:

1st. The doctrines and law of order authoritative in Christ's house, are complete, and may not be added unto.

2d. The life of Christ within the church, and its influence over the nations, is progressive.

3d. The introduction of unscriptural tests at the communion table is an invasion of Christ's prerogative—is full of danger to the peace of the church—is a bar to the progress of the gospel through the earth—and as such, is to be resisted.”

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CORRESPONDENCE.

MADISON, March 22d, 1860.

TO THE REV. W. L. GREEN :

DEAR SIR—Having listened with much pleasure to the sermons delivered by you on Sabbath, the 18th inst., and believing that their publication would subserve the cause of truth and the interests of religion, we would respectfully and earnestly request that you will consent to such publication, and that for this purpose you will favor us with a copy of the same at your early convenience.

With sentiments of sincere affection,

We are yours truly,

J. T. CLARK,	D. H. TULLIS,
J. W. STERLING,	D. S. DURRIE,
J. R. MEARS,	P. H. TURNER,
ROB'T MENZIES,	J. D. NOBLE.

MESSRS. J. T. CLARK, D. H. TULLIS,

J. W. STERLING, and others :

GENTLEMEN—Your note of the 22d is before me. I herewith put at your disposal the sermons which you request for publication. Hoping that they may in their measure, “subserve the cause of truth, and the interests of religion,” and reciprocating the kind sentiments you express.

I remain, yours sincerely,

W. L. GREEN.

SERMON I.

"And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after. But Christ as a Son over His own house."—HEB. 3-5, 6.

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by revelation of Jesus Christ."—GAL. 1-11, 12.

"Be not righteous overmuch ; neither make thyself over-wise ; why shouldst thou destroy thyself ?"—ECC. 7-16.

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do ?"—PS. 11-3.

Along the slopes of the green hills, and amid the valleys of Scotland, are scattered the graves of a number of men and women, who died as martyrs for Christ's crown and covenant. The record of their protracted struggle in defence of the doctrine of Christ's exclusive headship over the church, is one of the most animated and instructive pages of history. Through scenes of the extremest suffering and peril, they steadfastly witnessed that Christ is the King and sole Head of His church, and that no mortal power may with impunity offer any interference with His prerogative.

The contest touching the exclusive authority of the Lord Jesus Christ in His own house, which fills so large a space in Scottish story, has been renewed in our day, under a new, more subtile, but not less dangerous form.

Standing here this morning, not as a lecturer, but as a watchman, solemnly ordained in the name of Almighty God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, I feel it to be a duty to call your attention to this old contest, now renewed under a new guise. And in what I have to say, my address is chiefly to the members of my own flock, in whose behalf the Holy Ghost hath made me a steward, and an under shepherd. I wish you then, during this hour, to isolate yourselves from the world. Forget for the time being, your connection with that busy world where ten thousand crude fancies are striving for the predominance, and

reflect that you are in the house of God—the pillar and ground of the faith. That you are members of the flock of Christ. That Jesus is your King.

The Lord Jesus Christ was *born* of a subjugated people. Standing in the midst of the Roman Empire, in which numerous States had been in a greater or less degree deprived of their liberty, Christ waged no war upon the authority of Cæsar. When questioned of Cæsar's title to govern, He called for a penny bearing the Emperor's image, and said—"render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." When personal tribute was demanded of Him, He paid it. When Pilate taunted Him with having been delivered up by His own nation, He replied, "my kingdom is not of this world, if my kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight." Thus by His conduct and His express declaration, Christ discriminated His kingdom from the kingdoms of earth. And when, after His death, His apostles went forth to plant churches in an empire crowded with slaves, He gave them no commission to preach concerning political liberty. When He further charged them to go broadly over this sin ruined world, in which various forms of despotism have ever existed, He said not a word to them about any assault they were to make upon any form of authority exercised in any nation under the sun. He gave them no charge to admit into His church the subject, but reject the king, to receive the serf, but repulse the aristocratic lord who should be found ruling over him—to accept the slave, but to deny the communion to the master.

Whatever purpose Christ had of amending the policies of the nations, He reserved the execution of that purpose to Himself. He gave no commission touching it, into the hands of the officers of His church. Their simple commission was to go through the earth, to enter every region, to penetrate despotisms, kingdoms and republics, to preach to all the glad news of redemption through His cross; to baptize all, without exception, who should with sincerity profess penitence and faith; and having gathered them into churches, to teach them the doctrines of the bible and the law of love.

Now these definite instructions touching the nature of His kingdom, have neither been withdrawn nor modified by the Lord Jesus Christ; and no one save Himself, is of competent authority to withdraw, or modify them in the least degree. We therefore conclude that the

kingdom of our Master is to day as truly and as completely distinct from the political structures of the world, as it was in the hour when He declared it to be thus distinct. And that, since He never endowed the church with a function for reconstructing national policies, the church has not acquired that function by mere lapse of time.

It cannot be plead that the necessities of the world have engendered that function, inasmuch as the political necessities of the earth were apparently greater in Christ's day than they are now. And further, that no necessity can by any possibility engender such function, is clear—for if necessity can give rise to it, then necessity can supercede the exercise of Christ's prerogative, whence alone are derived the powers of the church; and necessity can, on such supposition, materially alter the nature of Christ's kingdom, which He has Himself declared to be not of this world.

In whatever part of the world men are regenerated and brought into the church of Christ, it is manifest that they will sustain two relations that are fundamentally distinct. They will at the same time be members of the church of Christ, and citizens of a State, units in a nation. Whilst these two relations, that of the church member toward the church, and that of the citizen toward the State, are thoroughly distinct, yet they cannot fail to affect each other. The nourishment to the soul derived through a living union with Christ, and an acquaintance with His word, cannot fail to awaken many aspiration for a completer adjustment of forces within Society. "Tis the lot of genius," says Guizot, "to strive perpetually with the disorder which it perceives." This too is the lot of the citizen, when renovated by christianity. The life, the aspiration, which he borrows from religion, passes over and expends itself within the State, upon laws and institutions. The forces of religion from within the Church, are thus ever, and inevitably acting upon the organizations of society, disintegrating and reconstructing them. The religion of Christ with its medicinal power, is thus penetrating the world's defective systems everywhere, purifying and rendering them more equitable and benign.

But is it not plain that all this may be done, and, if Christ's method is followed, it must be done, without involving the church as an organization in attacks upon any form of authority existing in the earth! Revolutions the most stupendous and beneficent may thus be accomplished; the force which works them out may be nourished by

the gospel; and yet that gospel through its living ministry, never breathe one word of assault against any of the world's manifold forms of authority. Despotism may thus melt under its solvent power, yet the gospel, as uttered by Christ and His apostles, passes the despot without assailing him. Monarchies may thus disappear and Republics spring up, yet neither Paul, Peter, or John, ever preached a Republic. And thus, slavery may under the power of Christ's cross, silently yield place to a better social order, though slaveholders are as welcome to shelter behind that cross, as any other class of men.

If it is possible for us, from plain words and a positive example, to form any distinct notion of Christ's plan for the amelioration of political evils, then it must be clear, that He did not intend to effect such amelioration by the direct action of His church through its courts, upon any form of earthly authority, but only to effect it through the forces of the gospel, passing beyond the church, and acting in the citizen.

But that we may gather in hand the main threads of this question, it will be necessary to look at an inquiry which underlies this whole subject, and which indeed gives it, in my judgment, its chief importance—connecting it with issues which involve the very foundation of our faith and therewith the whole network of human interests throughout the world. Much has been said in late years, of the progressive nature of religion. It has been reiterated in lectures, newspaper articles, magazines, semi-theological books, and from the pulpit, that Christianity is progressive. Men have repeated it to each other in private conferences, in the study, in the parlor, and upon the street. It has become worked into the substrata of a large part of the floating philosophy of the times. It has become a sort of Shiboleth, a test sentence, of admittance or rejection from sundry circles.

Now what is meant by this expression? It is vague, and it covers in its embrace one of the most glorious truths that can kindle hope in the breast of man, and one of most insidious falsehoods that has ever assailed the foundations of the church. If it be meant that the life of Christ in the bosom of the church, and its influence over the nations, is progressive, then it is delightfully, gloriously true. If it be meant that the doctrines and law of order authoritative in the church, are progressive—then it is DEEPLY, DANGEROUSLY FALSE. In this false and pernicious sense, it has gained more or less acceptance amongst different classes of superficial thinkers, throughout the coun-

Unacceptable public sentiment

try. And in this sense, inimical to our peace, it has been used by sundry persons to press new doctrines for our acceptance in theology and new tests for our use at the communion board of Christ.

The doctrines and law of order, authoritative in Christ's house, are derived through inspired men, DIRECTLY FROM GOD. Neither a doctrine or a law can in the church of God, claim absolute authority over my conscience, unless it is THUS DERIVED. This is the sole and exclusive origin of doctrines and laws competent to exert this supreme influence. "I certify you brethren," says Paul, "that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." This was the sole foundation of Paul's claim to be heard as a teacher, and to be obeyed as an officer, in the house of God. And no man can add doctrines or law, in the church, unless he shall first by miracle give proof that he is a messenger from God, sent to enjoin upon us a new commandment. Since the words authoritative over our faith, were not derived through a process of culture, but by direct divine teaching, no educational process can endow a man, or a set of men, to enjoin any item upon our faith. Therefore the church cannot by culture acquire the right to reconstruct its AUTHORITATIVE LAW OF ORDER, or doctrine.

Set aside this principle, and whither do you drift? You drift into that wild sea where Pharisees and Priests have made shipwreck of the faith, whilst they have taught for doctrine the commandments of men.

I have now one simple affirmation to make, which I wish you to ponder well. It is this: The Lord Jesus Christ, as Head and King over His Church, is the only Lawmaker for that Church. Neither the General Assembly, nor the Synod, nor the Presbytery, nor the Session, have any right to make a new law, touching any fundamental matter, pertaining to the order of Christ's house. They have no more right to make a new law, than they have to originate a new doctrine. They are simply overseers, whose duty it is to see that the order of Christ's house is maintained as He established it; and to see that the doctrines of Christ's spiritual kingdom are taught, as He announced them. Now here is a matter in which there can be no progress. To make a new law of a vital kind, or to institute a new doctrine in the house of God, would be to commit rebellion and to fall into heresy. And to ask a General Assembly, a Synod, or a Session, to do this, were to ask them to abandon their character as servants, and arrogate

a right belonging exclusively to the King—even the Lord Jesus Christ. It were to ask them to enter a path involving themselves inevitably in guilt, and involving the church in a labyrinth of perils. One of the most despotic tyrannies ever exercised on this earth, has been that of church officers, when they have wrongfully widened the exercise of their authority, and entered a domain sacred to the sceptre of Christ. Therefore every humble sheep of the flock is directly interested in guarding against the introduction of new and unscriptural enactments, touching any vital interests.

But if the officers of the church are utterly unwarranted in thrusting any new law of vital influence, of their own devising, upon the consciences of Christ's people, then it is evident that an outside popular sentiment, whencesoever arising, is not competent to demand the enforcement of any such new law. The house of Christ as to its method and order, is no more answerable at the bar of human philosophy and schemes of reform, than it was answerable at the bar of the Royal Stuarts of England. And if the tyranny of James and of Charles was to be resisted, when they claimed the right to interfere with the order of Christ's house, then the tyranny of popular sentiment is to be resisted, whenever it shall attempt the same thing, under new pretences.

To illustrate what has been said, let me remark that a fundamental and unwarranted law of order is intruded upon Christ's house, when men introduce there on any pretence, a test of fitness for the communion, not set forth in the scriptures. Whenever such new test is presented and enforced, a yoke is laid upon Christ's people, their liberty is infringed, a snare is set for the entanglement of their consciences, and the fruitful source is thereby provided, of bitterness and divisions. So that it becomes the plain and binding duty of the church, through its officers, and teachers, and members, to resist such test, and to set it aside. And even though such test should wear the appearance of enforcing greater purity, we are still to resist it, remembering that satan hath often appeared in the garb of an angel of light. Some of the most dangerous enactments of the Romish church, were pressed forward under the plea of securing greater purity. We are to resist it, remembering that it is written in the bible for our warning, "be not righteous overmuch; neither make thyself overwise, why wouldst thou destroy thyself?" If there were no other reason for resisting a

new test of communion, I would resist it, simply because not being ordained of Christ, it would of necessity be an invasion of His prerogative.

I do not mean to affirm that the human mind can attain to no other truths besides those set forth in the bible. Such an affirmation would be absurd. Every department of science furnishes a legitimate field for investigation, and new truths in each such field, are coming constantly to light. But no man has a right to incorporate any of these truths into a church creed, and enforce them upon my acceptance.—The only doctrines which are to be urged in the church as authoritative over the conscience and faith of man, are THOSE DERIVED TO US FROM GOD BY INSPIRATION

Again, men may form themselves into societies if they wish. They may adopt this rule or that rule, to regulate their actions. They may take this or that vow upon themselves, so long as they abstain from pledging themselves to things concerning which they have no right to vow. And thus they may multiply regulations for themselves, if they wish to do so. But the house of God is not a voluntary society. It is in an important particular widely different from a voluntary society. The principles and laws of a voluntary society may be modified or changed by a vote of the members, but the doctrines and laws of order in Christ's house cannot be thus changed. He has laid them down Himself. He is the exclusive King and Head of the church. Those who come into His house to be sheltered there, and saved, have no right to tamper with the foundations of doctrine and order that He has laid down. Therefore I am opposed even to calling the church of Christ a society, because it tends to confound it with voluntary societies, whose rules may be changed, whereas those of Christ's house may not be changed.

I regard the question of the completeness and permanence of the doctrines and law of order in Christ's house, as of unspeakably more importance than that of total abstinence from wine, or slavery, or both these and all kindred questions put together, "For if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" And the attempt to enlarge the foundations, is equivalent to unsettling them. If human convictions are to furnish the rule of faith, and prescribe with authority the line of our action in using discipline in God's house, who can tell how many and conflicting dogmas in theology, this fast

age may pour in upon us. To what could we then in any case make appeal? One man thinks it sinful to use wine, however temperately, and criminal to hold a slave. A second thinks there is no wrong in either thing, in itself considered. If, however, our convictions are competent to decide such questions, then both these men are right, though holding opinions directly contrary the one to the other. "That which I feel to be true, is true." "That which I feel to be right, is right." Now in the hot bed of the human brain, how many wild notions, fraught with catastrophe, would be germinated in a single century from this one root?

I claim that in the church, the word of God is the only authoritative rule of faith and practice. Even in matters of small import, the requirements of church courts are to be resisted, if they tend to the introduction of tyranny. If it were solemnly ordained by the presbytery that I should not enter the pulpit, save by the right hand aisle, I would invariably come up the left, by way of protest against an ordinance infringing Christ's prerogative, and tending to establish tyranny over His flock. And so, if the General Assembly should change its position, and declare that no man using wine, however temperately, and no man holding slaves, though treating them kindly, should come to the Lord's table, such injunction would merit resistance from every session in the land. The introduction of tyranny into Christ's house is no cure for intemperance, slavery, or any other evil. The remedy is worse than the disease, inasmuch as you thereby intoxicate church rulers with the love of power, and invade liberty in its last and most sacred refuge, even behind the altar of God, and at the communion board of Christ.

This dangerous invasion is perpetrated, whenever an unscriptural test is instituted at the doors of the church.

Lest I be misunderstood, let me here add, that the *suggestions* of church courts not tending unto tyranny, are for the sake of peace and unity of action, to be acquiesced in, though they be no other than *suggestions*.

When any question arises, which in one of its relations is the subject of action within church courts, and which, in another of its relations, is the subject of discussion by political parties, it is requisite that an officer in God's house, should discriminate these two relations, and discuss in his official capacity, only that one which as a steward

for Christ, it is his duty to discuss. With the political controversies touching slavery, I have no commission to say one word to you, or anybody else. Whether this or that measure affecting it shall be adopted by Congress, or the Legislatures, I do not feel called upon to utter one sentence. But whether a slaveholder who professes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is or is not to be rejected from the communion table, on the ground that he is a slaveholder, this is a question which affects the honor of Christ's house, and the rule of order which is to regulate the admission of men into it. This question affects in a fundamental and momentous way, our ideas of Christ's plan for spreading His gospel, and planting churches throughout the earth. Since a large section of these United States is a slaveholding region, it is manifest that if slaveholders have no title to admission to the church as communicants, then churches can be planted amongst them, only so fast as they shall manumit their slaves, and by thus doing, complete their eligibility for church membership. So that, if this view be true, the growth of the church must wait upon the advance of emancipation. If emancipation stands still, the growth of the church amongst slaveholding families must stand still. But the emancipation of slaves is not at this time going on rapidly. It is therefore a matter of deep practical interest to ascertain whether the view above mentioned, is a scriptural one. To American Christians, as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is of great moment to know distinctly, whether they are to hold the church in waiting upon the growth of emancipation, or whether they will best imitate their Master and His apostles, by going far in advance of emancipation, and organizing churches of all such, masters and slaves, as shall profess their hope in Christ, through regeneration of the Holy Ghost.

This is a question which has nothing to do with politics, but relates strictly to the action of church courts; and this question it is suitable that I should here discuss.

I have said on former occasions that "slavery is not a sin;" and further, that "in my deliberate judgment the courts of the Presbyterian church could not deviate from the course they have adopted in admitting believing slaveholders to the communion, without involving themselves in the guilt of infringing Christ's prerogative as head of His house, and using tyranny over Christ's flock." I will now proceed to vindicate these opinions.

Let the question be distinctly understood :

1. It IS NOT whether there are evils growing out of slavery, and crimes practiced in connection with it. It would be idle to discuss this question. Who doubts that there are great evils and deplorable crimes occasioned by slavery in every region where it exists ?

2. The question IS NOT whether we shall indorse the details of the slave codes of the several States. There are respects in which I think those codes iniquitous, and they ought to be thoroughly amended.

3. The question IS NOT whether it is right to catch free men and enslave them. Who imagines that I designed to teach such a doctrine? The General Assembly of our church has distinctly condemned the slave trade as a crime, and I fully indorse that deliverance.

In 1818 the Assembly declared, " we consider the voluntary enslaving of one portion of the human race by another, as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature ; as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves, and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ, which enjoins that all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."*

4. The question IS NOT whether we are to seek to perpetuate slavery. Our church, through its Assembly and various Synods both North and South, has distinctly and emphatically borne witness, that we should as Christians and philanthropists, seek the emancipation of the slaves as soon as it may be practicable, and for the good of the enslaved ; and with this sentiment I have from childhood agreed.

In 1835, a committee appointed by the Synod of Kentucky, published the following articles, recommending a plan of emancipation :

1. " We would recommend that slaves now under twenty years of age, and all those yet to be born in our possession, be emancipated as they severally reach their twenty-fifth year.

2. " We recommend that deeds of emancipation be now drawn up, and recorded in our respective county courts, specifying the slaves we are about to emancipate, and the age at which each is to become free.

* Those who wish to see the whole action of 1818 on this subject, are referred to "Baird's Digest," page 820.

3. "We recommend that our slaves be instructed in the common elementary branches of education.

4. "We recommend that strenuous and persevering efforts be made to induce them to attend regularly upon the ordinary services of religion, both domestic and public.

5. "We recommend that great pains be taken to teach them the holy scriptures; and that to effect this, the instrumentality of Sabbath schools, wherever they can be enjoyed, be united with that of domestic instruction."

If I may here be allowed an allusion to an item of family history, I will remark that my father—during a number of years an Elder in the Presbyterian church, and frequently a member of the Synod in question—acted in accordance with these recommendations. By deeds of emancipation, recorded in the clerk's office, he freed those of his negroes under twenty-five years of age. The balance of them he committed, as being unfitted for freedom, to the charge of his children.

In only one particular have I ever doubted the wisdom of his course. Those that were freed now live in Kentucky. It would have been my choice to have sent them to the shores of Africa, where a young republic is rapidly rising to diffuse civilization and religious knowledge through the continent.

5. The question IS NOT whether the slavedrover, who speculates in human bodies as if they were cattle—whether this man is innocent. I never met a professor of religion, North or South, who did not hold such a man in abhorrence.

The question to be considered, is simply whether slaveholding in itself is sinful? Is the relation subsisting between master and servant, apart from its abuse, a sinful one? And is the master on that account to be debarred the communion?

Let me first remark that a relation which it were sinful to establish by force, may, when established, be innocently maintained. Thus most of the monarchies of Europe had their birth in violence and blood. But who doubts that a Christian king could sit with a good conscience upon any of the hereditary thrones of the old country, using his authority for the good of his subjects? Where is the church that would expel such king upon the plea that his throne arose, and was built, by craft and wickedness?

Again, no man living in any relation, is bound to use all the power

with which the laws endow him. For instance, the law of this State touching divorce, is unscriptural, and tends in a measure unto license. But is the existence of such a law a proof that we or our wives, design to commit the iniquity of getting divorced? You may live in the utmost harmony, obeying the scriptures, notwithstanding the liberty granted by our statute book. And thus a Christian master may studiously avoid any abuse of his authority; he may, indeed, live as a servant of servants—ministering daily to his household in those things which tend to their growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And it is in this precise way that our Assembly and our Synods hold it to be the duty of masters to live, teaching their servants, and striving to elevate them against that day when their national freedom shall dawn.

Let us, however, proceed in the direction of the bible evidence on this subject. When Paul went through the Roman empire, planting churches, that empire was crowded with slaves. Gibbon states, that during the period intervening from the year 98 before Christ to the year 180 after Christ, "the slaves were equal in number to the free inhabitants of the Roman world." (GIB. ROME, vol. i., p. 52.) The historian, Robertson, states that there were twice as many slaves as free citizens; whilst Blair estimates the number of slaves as three times that of freemen. Let me here read you an extract from Gibbon, illustrative of this point. He says "the ministers of pomp and sensuality were increased beyond the conception of modern luxury. It was more for the interest of the merchant or manufacturer to purchase than to hire his workmen; in the country, slaves were employed as the cheapest and most laborious instruments of agriculture. To confirm the general observation, and to display the multitudes of slaves, we might allege a variety of particular instances. It was discovered, on a very melancholy occasion, that four hundred slaves were maintained in a single palace in Rome." (These four hundred slaves were all *executed*, because they did not *prevent* the murder of their master.) "The same number of four hundred belonged to an estate which an African widow, of a very private condition, resigned to her son, whilst she reserved for herself a much larger share of her property. A freed man, under the name of Augustus, though his fortune had suffered great losses in the civil wars, left behind him three thousand six hundred yoke of oxen, two hundred and fifty thousand head of smaller cattle,

and what was almost included in the description of cattle, four thousand and one hundred and sixteen slaves.”—(GIB. ROME. vol. i., p. 52.) Now Paul, in planting churches through this slave empire, never uttered an injunction to masters to free their slaves, not one.

But some may say that Roman slavery was not like American slavery. Well, in what respects, affecting this question, was it different? Had the master less power over his slave? Until the time of Hadrian and the Antonines, the master had absolute power over him, extending to the taking of life without the intervention of the magistrate. Gibbon commends the benign policy of Hadrian and the Antonines in placing the magistrate between the master and the slave. Hear his language: “The progress of manners was accelerated by the virtue or policy of the emperors; and by the edicts of Hadrian and the Antonines, the protection of the laws was extended to the most abject of mankind. The jurisdiction of life and death over the slaves, a power long exercised and often abused, was taken out of private hands and reserved to the magistrates alone. The subterraneous prisons were abolished; and, upon a just complaint of intolerable treatment, the injured slave obtained either his deliverance or a less cruel master.”—GIB. ROM., vol. 1, p. 52.

Now when did these emperors live? Their reign occurred more than a hundred years after the birth of Christ. During the time then of Paul, the subterranean prisons were in existence, and no magistrate was empowered to rescue the slave from the intolerable abuses of the vindictive master. Both Robertson and Guizot, speak of the intolerable evils of Roman slavery. And though the edicts of Hadrian and the Antonines cannot be ascribed to a regard for the Christian religion, yet Guizot strenuously affirms that it was the gradual spread of that religion, which, above every other cause, tended to mitigate servile rigors. This is true, yet standing in the heart of that empire, where slavery was to be met and its abuses removed, Paul never enjoined emancipation. Thus far the conduct of Paul and his associates, furnishes presumptive evidence that they did not consider it part of their business to call in question the authority of the master. But at this point the argument becomes positive, and sweeps on to the conclusion, with a chain of evidence, simple, unbroken, and incontrovertible.

Timothy, a minister of the gospel, and associated with Paul, was left by the apostle for a season, at Ephesus, to preach to the church,

to instruct it in doctrine and to establish its order, Paul wrote him two letters, giving him directions as to sound doctrine, and as to his use of his authority, in the house of God. In the 6th chapter of the first of these epistles, occurs the following language :

"Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to Godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw thyself." (verses 1-5.

The term, under the yoke, is, I believe, universally admitted, by intelligent men, to signify the condition of the slave. Even those who will not consent that servant is equivalent to slave, yet admit that servants under the yoke, were slaves. If this is denied, I have never heard such a denial from any scholarly man in the country.

Now follow the apostle's language through, and note its points.

First then, he exhorts those "under the yoke to count their own masters worthy of all honor"—and why? "That the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed." The reason given by the apostle, is a strong and noteworthy one. Christ had declared His kingdom to be *not* of this world. But if Paul had taught insubordination to the slaves, he would have assailed, as a preacher, the form of authority under which the slave members of the church lived. He would have brought upon Christ's spiritual kingdom a similar reproach to that which the Jews cast upon it, when they sought to convict Christ of meditating conspiracy against Cæsar.

But let us pass on. Some have said that those under the yoke, here mentioned, were the slaves of heathen masters. It is probable that some of them were bondmen in heathen families. But that all such in the church were not the slaves of heathen masters, is evident from the next verse. "And they that have BELIEVING masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren; but rather do them ser-

vice, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort." Note Paul's words. He speaks to servants under the yoke, that is to slaves. He speaks of their "*believing masters*," and calls them "*brethren, faithful, beloved, partakers of the benefit*." Now who is the man that is a brother of apostles, "faithful, beloved, partaker of the benefit?" Why he is a child of God, he is an heir with Christ; and yet such in Paul's time, were master's of those under the yoke. They were the masters of slaves, and that under a system which legalized a control more unlimited than is sanctioned by the statutes of any State in this Union. And who that knows the southern church in detail, who that has mingled with its families, but recognizes that this description of Paul, and also the description by Peter of believing masters in their day, is applicable without abatement to numerous Christian slaveholders in our time? 'Tis my honest conviction that some amongst the noblest specimens of Christian manhood to be found on this earth, may in thirty hours travel be found amongst converted masters, and some of them masters in union with our own church. Some spirits amongst the ripest for heaven, that it has been my privilege to meet in this ruined world, were women charged with the control and care of slaves. Verily they were "good and gentle," "faithful and beloved and partakers of the benefit."

But to return. Paul solemnly enjoins it upon Timothy, "these things teach and exhort." What things was he to teach? Why that servants under the yoke were to count their own masters worthy of all honor, lest by their failure in this respect, they should give rise to blasphemy against the name of God, and the doctrine of Christ. 2nd. He was to teach those who had believing masters, to serve them more willingly, because of the character of their masters. Because of their being "*brethren, faithful, beloved, partakers of the benefit*." Now let me ask, what other qualifications can any man need for admission to the church? If he is a brother of Paul and Christ, if he is become a partaker of the benefit of Christ's death, and thus a member in fact of God's family, why should he not come to Christ's board? It is most clear that the simple fact of their being masters, raised no scruple in Paul's mind as to his receiving them as "*brethren and beloved*."

But if the being masters involves men necessarily in crime, how

could Paul when speaking of those thus involved, call them "faithful, beloved, partakers of the benefit?" How strange to hear an inspired man speaking, for instance, of a thief as a thief, and calling him "faithful, and beloved, and a partaker of the heirship of God?" But he here speaks of believing masters as masters, and masters of those under the yoke, and yet uses toward them the strongest terms of confidence and endearment. When then we remember that the Roman masters exercised a more unlimited control than masters in our day are allowed by law, the conclusion is irresistible, that the simple relation which a Christian slaveholder sustains to his servant, is not in itself sinful.

Paul said to Timothy, "these things teach and exhort." But suppose Timothy had refused to teach with the rest, that believing masters are "faithful and beloved and partakers of the benefit!" what would this refusal have been but a departure from "the form of sound words," and an infringement of Christ's prerogative; for as we shall immediately notice, these words of Paul were the words of *Christ himself*.

In the very next verse Paul says to Timothy, "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing gain to be godliness; from such withdraw thyself." Do you not perceive how difficult it is to comment with any honesty upon these verses, without saying things which may to some ears sound harsh. But in truth I mean not to be harsh, but only sincere, in handling the word of God. Let me then say that, if there were no ultra abolitionists in the day of Paul, then these verses contain one of the most remarkable portraits which forecasting inspiration ever enabled a prophet to draw. If the intractable agitators that in some regions have rent the church, had sat before the apostle, he could not with more accuracy have described the outline of that character, which their unbridled enthusiasm tends to engender. I especially wish those of you who belong to my own flock, to study these verses well in your own homes, and I will therefore only pause to make a brief comment upon them.

Paul says then, "if any man teach otherwise"—otherwise than what? Why things other than, different from, those enjoined in the first and second verses. And if any man "consent not to wholesome words." Then Paul thought those words "wholesome," which expressly declared the believing masters of those under the yoke to be "brethren—faithful—beloved—partakers of the benefit." But mark, "even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ"—the apostle drives his nail, and clinches it—none can say that he spoke these things on his own responsibility. In Christ's name, *he lays down a law of order in the church*. "And to the doctrine which is according to godliness." Paul then thought this whole doctrine, including his brotherly estimate of believing masters of those under the yoke, to be a good one and according to godliness. "He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions," &c. Upon this portrait drawn by inspiration, I will not comment further, but will leave it for your meditation.

I will not go into the exegesis of any other passage of scripture, for this is conclusive.

If a law is distinctly laid down, if a principle is clearly announced upon one page of your statute book—and nowhere recalled—it is acknowledged by your courts and guides their action.

When Paul speaks of masters or of servants, it is to enjoin their relative duties. But never once does he enjoin emancipation as amongst those duties. And if we deny that Paul is to be obeyed when he says, "these things teach and exhort," do you not see that we thereby open *a gap through the foundations*—and a gap for the flooding waters of infidelity. If "even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ," in the mouth of Paul, are not to be minded, where shall we get our counsel on any great question of duty?

There are recognized in our church four courts, three of which are appellate. A case originating before the Session of a single church, may be carried by appeal to the Presbytery, and from the Presbytery to the Synod, and from the Synod to the General Assembly. The Session then is the primary court. Amongst other powers lodged in it, is that of receiving or rejecting those who apply for admission to the church. At this point they have an actual authority, but it is an authority limited by the apostolic injunction, and the apostolic example.

The apostolic injunction and the apostolic example furnish that fundamental law of order for Christ's house, which is complete and may not be added unto. Now in all practical question touching the admission of persons to the church, it is manifest that the apostolic example is to be construed as embodying the apostolic injunction. Paul's instructions to officers, are illustrated by his own acts as an officer. If as an officer, called to the apostleship, inspired, and set apart to organize the church, if in this capacity he recognized men of a certain class as suitable persons to be in the church, then elders and pastors are bound now, and until the day of a new revelation, to recognize that same class as suitable persons to be admitted to the communion table.

It is sometimes said that the church has made great progress since the days of Paul, and this is seriously urged as an argument for an improvement upon Paul's instructions to Timothy when he said, "these things teach and exhort." If the persons who advocate this novel idea, mean that the teachers of religion in this day, have clearer views of doctrine than had the apostles, it is manifestly untrue. Those men were inspired expressly to restate and expand the teachings of Jesus, and all our knowledge of authoritative doctrine, is derived through them from God. If it be meant that we have attained to clearer views of the law of order suitable for Christ's house, than Paul had, the same reply is applicable. Paul and Peter were inspired that they might organize the church; and we have not, nor can we by any possibility get (without a new revelation) a single fundamental law of order for the church, save those which they have given us by precept and example.

There is another class of persons who quote the scripture precept, "do unto others as you would that they should do unto you," and apply it as a ground of discipline against slaveholders. But that Christ did not intend this precept to be applied for the assailment of the simple authority of masters, is evident from the fact that His inspired servants, surrounded on all hands by slaveholders, and busy organizing churches in their midst, never applied it in this way.

Now our church holds to the obligation of masters to obey this precept, as well as other men, and to obey it in regard to their slaves. But who is to be the judge of what this precept will lead a master to do for his slaves? One man says it will lead him to set them free at

once. But I can take you to slaveholders, who give every evidence of being regenerated men and students of the bible, who do not thus construe it. They would conceive it to be an irreparable calamity to their slaves, if thrown into the world, upon their own resources, without being in the first place further imbued with civilization. It must be borne in mind that we as a race have been near eight centuries attaining our present fitness for freedom. If I had five hundred negroes under my control, I would at once free those whom I believed would be benefitted thereby. But the rest I would not free, but at death would leave the charge of their further culture to my children, with the advice to free them when they should deem them prepared for liberty.

The mistake with a numerous class of persons, has been, to take this precept, and constitute themselves the judges of what it should prompt men to do. But if the attempt were made by every man to enforce his individual inferences from this precept, upon the conscience of his neighbor, what an intolerable set of tyrants we would all become? A man would scarce be able to employ an hour's time, or to expend ten dollars of money, without being censured by some intrusive neighbor for a failure to obey the precept.

I have said that our church recognizes the application of this precept to slavery. It does so first, for the removal of its numerous abuses; second, for the moral and intellectual elevation of the slave race; and third, for their eventual and entire freedom from bondage. From its highest judicatories it has sent forth exhortations to masters to be diligent as stewards for God, in improving their servants; to which exhortations, I rejoice to know that many give a warm response.

Let me here read an additional extract from the Assembly's minutes of 1818:

(f) "We recommend to all the members of our religious denomination not only to permit, but to facilitate and encourage the instruction of their slaves in the principles and duties of the Christian religion; by granting them liberty to attend on the preaching of the gospel, when they have opportunity; by favoring the instruction of them in the Sabbath school, wherever those schools can be found; and by giving them all other proper advantages for acquiring a knowledge of their duty both to God and man. We are perfectly satisfied, that

it is incumbent on all Christians to communicate religious instruction to those who are under their authority, so that the doing of this in the case before us, so far from operating as some have apprehended, as an incitement to insubordination and insurrection, would, on the contrary, operate as the most powerful means for the prevention of those evils."

I will now proceed to read the action of our Assembly in 1845. The instrument adopted by that Assembly, as embodying its views, is one of extraordinary clearness. It is a distinct, unambiguous announcement of doctrine on this subject, and contains, as I trust, the deliverance to which our church will in future refer as containing a final expression of its convictions. I will therefore read the paper in full.*

ACTION OF 1845.

"The committee to whom were referred the memorials on the subject of slavery, beg leave to submit the following report :

(a) "The memorialists may be divided into three classes: 1. Those who represent the system of slavery, as it exists in these United States, as a great evil, and pray this Assembly to adopt measures for the amelioration of the condition of the slaves. 2. Those who ask the Assembly to receive memorials on the subject of slavery, to allow a full discussion of it, and to enjoin upon the members of our church, residing in States whose laws forbid the slaves being taught to read, to seek by all lawful means for the repeal of those laws. 3. Those who represent slavery as a moral evil, a heinous sin in the sight of God, calculated to bring upon the church the curse of God, and calling for the exercise of discipline in the case of those who persist in maintaining or justifying the relation of master to slaves.

(b) "The question which is now unhappily agitating and dividing

* NOTE.—The question discussed in this discourse, whether the relation subsisting between the master and slave is in itself sinful, and therefore to be construed as debarring the master from the communion, seems not to have been brought before the Assembly of 1818 in that distinct form in which it was presented for final discussion in 1845. The Assembly of 1818 had its eye rather upon the general evils which subsist in connection with the system.

But that this Assembly did not intend, by any part of its utterance, to condemn slaveholding as a sin *per se*, and a bar to communion, is evident, first, from the fact that it neither enjoined nor recommended to any Session, to use the simple ground of slaveholding as a basis of discipline against any man; and in the second place, its deliverance (articles c, d,) contains the distinct intimation that too hasty an emancipation would be an injury to the negroes, possibly involving themselves and others in ruin. Whatever, then, is taught in the action of 1818, it is not there taught that slaveholding is in itself a sin, and a proper ground of discipline.

other branches of the church, and which is pressed upon the attention of the Assembly, by one of the three classes of memorialists just named, is, whether the holding of slaves is, under all circumstances, a heinous sin, calling for the discipline of the church.

(c) The church is a spiritual body, whose jurisdiction extends to the religious faith and moral conduct of her members. She cannot legislate, where Christ has not legislated, nor make terms of membership which He has not made. The question, therefore, which the Assembly is called upon to decide, is this. Do the scriptures teach that the holding of slaves, without regard to circumstances, is a sin, the renunciation of which should be made a condition of membership in the church of Christ?

(d) "It is impossible to answer this question in the affirmative, without contradicting some of the plainest declarations of the word of God. That slavery existed in the days of Christ and His Apostles is an admitted fact. That they did not denounce the relation itself as sinful, as inconsistent with christianity; that slaveholders were admitted to membership in churches organized by the apostles; that, whilst they were required to treat their slaves with kindness, and as rational, accountable, immortal beings, and, if Christians, as brethren in the Lord, they were not commanded to emancipate them; that slaves were required to be "obedient to their masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, with singleness of heart as unto Christ," are facts which meet the eye of every reader of the New Testament. This Assembly cannot, therefore, denounce the holding of slaves as necessarily a heinous and scandalous sin, calculated to bring upon the church the curse of God, without charging the apostles of Christ with conniving at sin, introducing into the church such sinners, and thus bringing upon them the curse of the Almighty.

(e) "In so saying, however, the Assembly is not to be understood as denying that there is evil connected with slavery. Much less do they approve those defective and oppressive laws by which, in some of the States, it is regulated. Nor would they by any means countenance the traffic in slaves for the sake of gain; the separation of husbands and wives, parents and children, for the sake of "filthy lucre," or for the convenience of the master; or cruel treatment of slaves in any respect. Every Christian and philanthropist should seek, by all peaceable and lawful means, the repeal of unjust and oppressive laws,

and the amendment of such as are defective, so as to protect the slaves from cruel treatment by wicked men, and secure to them the right to receive religious instruction.

(f) "Nor is the Assembly to be understood as countenancing the idea that masters may regard their servants as mere property, and not as human beings, rational, accountable, immortal. The scriptures prescribe not only the duties of servants, but of masters also, warning the latter to discharge those duties, knowing that their Master is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with Him.

(g) The Assembly intend simply to say, that since Christ and His inspired apostles did not make the holding of slaves a bar to communion, we, as a court of Christ, have no authority to do so; since they did not attempt to remove it from the church by legislation, we have no authority to legislate on the subject. We feel further constrained to say, that however desirable it may be to ameliorate the condition of the slaves in the Southern and Western States, or to remove slavery from our country, these objects, we are fully persuaded, can never be secured by ecclesiastical legislation. Much less can they be attained by those indiscriminate denunciations against slaveholders, without regard to their character or circumstances, which have to so great an extent characterized the movements of modern abolitionists, which so far from removing the evils complained of, tend only to perpetuate and aggravate them. The apostles of Christ sought to ameliorate the condition of slaves, not by denouncing and excommunicating their masters, but by teaching both masters and slaves the glorious doctrines of the gospel, and enjoining upon each the discharge of their relative duties. Thus only can the church of Christ, as such, now improve the condition of the slaves in our country.

(h) "As to the extent of the evils involved in slavery, and the best methods of removing them, various opinions prevail, and neither the scriptures nor our constitution authorize this body to prescribe any particular course to be pursued by the churches under our care. The Assembly cannot but rejoice, however, to learn that the ministers and churches in the slaveholding States, are awaking to a deeper sense of their obligations to extend to the slave population generally the means of grace, and many slaveholders not professedly religious, favor this object. We earnestly exhort them to abound more and more in this good work. We would exhort every believing master to remem-

ber that his Master is in heaven, and in view of all the circumstances in which he is placed, to act in the spirit of the golden rule, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so unto them.'

"In view of the above stated principles and facts—

"RESOLVED, 1. That the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States was originally organized, and has since continued the bond of union in the church, upon the conceded principle that the existence of domestic slavery, under the circumstances in which it is found in the southern portion of the country, is no bar to Christian communion.

"2. That the petitions that ask the Assembly to make the holding of slaves in itself a matter of discipline, do virtually require this judicatory to dissolve itself, and abandon the organization, under which, by the Divine blessing, it has so long prospered. The tendency is evidently to separate the northern from the southern portion of the church; a result which every good citizen must deplore, as tending to the dissolution of the union of our beloved country, and which every enlightened Christian will oppose, as bringing about a ruinous and unnecessary schism between brethren who maintain a common faith."—(BAIRD'S DIGEST, p. 822.)

Some individuals are ready to affirm that this judgment of the Old School Presbyterian Church was dictated by policy. If so, it is a policy originated by the example of the Apostles. It is a policy dictated by that law of order engrafted in the church by apostolic authority, and which cannot be cast out but at the risk of wrenching the foundations of our faith, and marring Christ's scheme for the evangelization of the world. If we are at liberty to improve upon Paul's method in this particular, where shall the spirit of innovation cease? Such innovation, I maintain, is INCIPIENT TYRANNY, REARING ITS ODISIOUS HEAD BESIDE THE VERY COMMUNION BOARD OF CHRIST.

To say that policy, in the evil sense of that term, has dictated the conduct of the Presbyterian church touching slavery, is simply absurd. Principle has dictated it. A calm determination to abide by the law of order derived from the apostolic teachings, has dictated it. Do you know aught of these men as a body? Have you an acquaintance with the general character of the eldership and ministry of the Old School Presbyterian Church in these United States? Amongst them are numbered men of the highest repute as civilians, as jurists, as legislators, as patriots, as scholars, and as theologians. Amongst them are men of every shade of opinion touching the policy best for the nation. Amongst them are men eminent in their communities as

members of the great political parties—as Republicans, Democrats, and Old Whigs. And, as a body, I will say that for dignity of character, for width of information, for severity of thought, for discriminating power of intellect, for genuine integrity, and for a true hearted devotion to the great interests of mankind—for these qualities, the officers of this church, as a body, are unsurpassed by any class of men in the country. No graver, more studious, more conscientious, or more patriotic body of men is wont to assemble in the land, than the General Assembly, composed of elders and ministers of this church. And yet it is the deliberate judgment of this Assembly, composed of men who as to politics are distributed through the ranks of the several parties of the country, that slaveholding is not *per se* a sin against God, and is not in itself a scriptural bar from the communion. To ascribe this decision to policy, were idle. 'Tis a policy engendered by that steadfast devotion to the crown of Christ which will allow no social exigency, and no outside pressure, to urge them as stewards, into the guilt of infringing the great King's prerogative as Lawmaker for His own house. This church has refused to commit this trespass, though vehemently urged to it by innumerable influences, expending themselves through the medium of lectures, newspapers, periodicals, and sermons. With calm serenity her grave Assembly has stood like some rooted rock, amid the flowing and foaming waters of public opinion. Long may it thus stand, a mighty pillar of religious freedom in this land and throughout the world! Long may it thus stand, reaching out through its large company of converted masters, the hand of succor, the torch of knowledge, the pledge of future national freedom, to the race now in bondage.

There are great principles pertaining both to doctrine and to the law of order in Christ's house, which may lie in the word comparatively unnoticed, until an exigency arises. They are like the anchors and coils of cable which ships carry against times of storm. During sunny days, when the sea is unruffled and dangers distant, the sailor passes his anchor with carelessness. But let the winds rise, let the sea roll up its billows, let the rocks show themselves through the fretting surge, and straightway he flings his grappling hook into the depths of the sea; it taketh hold upon the roots of the ocean; the stout cable is strained like a muscle of steel; the ship rides at anchor, and the sailor lies down in his cot and sleeps, whilst the storm

blusters its strength away, and sinks, too, to rest. Into such peril the good ship of our church hath often come, and her wont hath been to pluck her anchors from the word, to cast them with calm faith out amid the storm, and then with David to lift up a song and say, "return unto thy rest O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

And now brethren, touching this whole matter, let me say, that I am full willing you should sometimes feel a stout breeze from without. Were it all smooth sailing, I should grow jealous of you and of myself. I would see you tried and proved, that I may know unto what degree of knowledge of the scriptures you have attained. That it may be ascertained with what degree of clearness you perceive and understand the spirituality of Christ's kingdom; and with what tenacity you hold to the doctrine of Christ's supremacy, and the permanency of his law of order in his own house.

In my earlier years I had a constitutional proclivity towards fanaticism, of one kind or another. God only knows the griefs that this vitiated tendency hath wrought me, in days gone by. And now that I am, through the doctrines and gentleness of Christ, happily purged of this evil leaven, I will not shun to warn you of its power to blind the judgment, to warp the temper, and to embitter the life.

Let me bring this discourse to an end, by reiterating two of the propositions announced from this pulpit on last Sabbath: 1st. The doctrines and law of order authoritative in Christ's house, are complete, and may not be added unto. 2d. The introduction of unscriptural tests at the communion table, is an invasion of Christ's prerogative, is full of danger to the peace of the church, is a bar to the progress of the gospel through the earth, and as such, is to be resisted.

SERMON II.

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, *Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*—1 COR. 1-23, 24.

And in the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed : and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.—DAN. 2-44.

The kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ is steadily rooting itself amid the nations. Its influence is pervading their literature, their commerce, and their policies. All the civilized families of mankind have felt, and are destined to feel in a still greater degree, the power of that life which, planting itself in the hearts of individuals, spreads its purifying influence outward, through the State, through the nation, through the world. Thus like leaven, the religion of Jesus is still working, and must work, till every social system, with all its included activities, shall have felt its remedial power, and shall have grown nobler and more benign thereby. And in that day of glorious consummation, when the wilderness will begin to bloom like the rose, the Lord alone shall be glorified. In that day when the nations with all their harness on, with all their enginery of various forces in full play, shall stand subjugated unto Christ, and ready to do His bidding, it shall every where be inscribed, "the cross hath wrought this victory." Then, in clearer light, than during these dim days, is given unto any of us, shall all men see that the cross of Christ is "*the wisdom and the power of God.*" When Kings and Queens are become nursing fathers and nursing mothers unto the church, the strange and glorious achievement will have been wrought through the story of the cross. The story of the cross, told and retold round the world, shall, with its melting power, effect what no other agency in the universe is commissioned to effect. It shall through love, subjugate men to

Christ's scepter, and win them to the glory of IMITATING HIS EXAMPLE.

The heaven now works. But it is a ruined world that is to be pervaded thereby. Gross darkness is to be dissipated. Barbarism which centuries have entrenched, is to be broken up. Propensities that have in them the germs of hell and eternal death, are to be rooted out. *A race apostate from God, dead in sin, subject to the devil, and languishing under the curse of the law*, such a race is to be renovated and brought into the glory of serving God. And for this race, there is no gospel but one. There is no evangel that can measure its want, sound its woe, and speak to it a single glad word, touching a perfect cure, save the evangel of the cross. And the utterance of this gospel must be backed, steadily and persistently backed, by the energies of Almighty God, or it could not push on through the huge and various difficulties that obstruct its path.

It is no wonder, considering our infirmities, that earnest souls in different ages, have grown weary in waiting for the gospel to complete its triumphs in a world where evils are so thrifty. It was not a strange presumption that caused Uzzah to lay hands on the ark of God, to steady it, as the jolting cart drew it over the uneven ground—yet that presumption cost him his life. Nor should we be surprised that an urgent and unwise zeal should prompt individuals in every age, to lay hands on Christ's method for the world's cure, and try to improve it. But this endeavor, though it reveal itself in the church and amongst the brethren, is to be resisted, inasmuch as, if we tamper with Christ's method, we thereby involve ourselves in guilt; and our effort to amend it is sure to corrupt it, thereby abating its fitness to pervade the world, and hindering the achievement of that very end which we desire to see effected.

It was shown this morning, that the kingdom of Christ is spiritual; that it institutes through the church, no assault upon the form of any authority in the earth; that ministers and elders have no commission by virtue of which they can bring the church courts into organic conflict with the authority of the master over the slave. 'Tis not the possession of power in any man's hands that the gospel assails; 'tis the temper he cherishes and the spirit in which he uses his power, that the gospel seeks to rectify and conform to the spirit of Christ, who *died out of love for his guilty people*. The gospel seeks first to

make the king, the despot and the master, *stewards and spiritual servants* of those under them. This effected, it leaves civil policy to take that form into which the renovated spirit of society may mould it. It leaves the citizen free, and untrammelled by church courts, to go his way and cast his vote for such laws as he shall deem expedient, and wise, and just. And thus, exempt from the unhallowed passions which prompt to proscription and intolerance, the gospel of Christ seeks to make its way into the heart of hoary despotisms, of monarchies, of aristocracies, and of slave empires, there, within the secret souls of men, to stir up those heavenly aspirations, which are everywhere, the bright harbingers of liberty and higher civil order. But in doing this, Christ decisively, by solemn declarations, by example, by the precepts and conduct of inspired men, sets forth that His kingdom is spiritual, and is not to be brought into organic conflict with the kingdoms of this world. To institute this conflict, were to remove the issue from the interior to the outer life. It were to degrade the glory of the cross, which by the power of love, is to subdue men, and cause them from highest to lowest, to love and serve each other heartily.

Now it is in view of this expansiveness of the life of Christ within the church, and this progressiveness of its influence over the nations, that I am to night, to vindicate the course of the Old School Presbyterian Church touching slavery, as a course eminently wise, righteous, and accordant with the example of Christ and his apostles. I maintain that this church has shown a SIMPLE FAITH touching the EXPANSIVENESS of the DIVINE LIFE IN MAN, and its power ultimately to REMOULD SOCIETY, which I regret to say, has not been shared in an equal degree by several bodies of Christians in our land. It may be truthfully said that the Presbyterian Church has planted itself firmly upon the position, that it is its great duty to preach the gospel to all classes of men ; and that the doctrine of a crucified King, is to prove "the power of God" for effecting whatsoever He hath intended to effect through the church. And thus, resisting the infirmities of the flesh, and striving to still all impatience, it has waited upon that God whose plans sweep through eternity, and with whom centuries are as days. In exact accordance with the example of Paul, it has carried the gospel, without invidious distinction, to all ranks of men. It has found free and welcome entrance to the homes of masters, and enjoined

Paul's commandments to masters upon them. It has found entrance amongst the negroes, and declared unto them that kingdom of God which taketh no account of bond or free, but where all are "new creatures in Christ Jesus." Whilst it has not undertaken to legislate upon the authority of the master as though it were in itself iniquitous, it has in the distinctest terms spoken from its highest courts, warned masters of the evils and crimes which ordinarily spring up out of slavery; it has warned them of the solemn obligation they are under to treat their slaves with kindness, and to pay due attention to their moral and religious cultivation; and it has borne an earnest witness, through its courts held both in slave States and free States that the spirit of religion as it rises up within nations, tends directly to remove, first, the grosser evils of slavery, and finally, to remove slavery itself. Thus clinging to the gospel, avoiding fanaticism, avoiding the use of an unscriptural effort to tyrannize over masters in respect to their authority, this church has found everywhere entrance, and sent out everywhere its testimonies to its slaveholding membership.

Now a different course from this, an attempt to increase either the doctrines or the laws of order in Christ's house, would speedily and inevitably interfere with the development of Christ's life in the church, and its influence over the nations. This is abundantly shown in the late history of some American churches. Those churches that have undertaken to improve on the doctrines of the bible, have undermined their faith and declined in grace. Those churches that have undertaken to improve the law of order in Christ's house, have been rent in sunder, and their fields of usefulness curtailed. Thus, by striving, contrary to the law of order used by Paul, to cut off slaveholders from the church, simply on the ground of their slaveholding, some denominations have cut themselves off from a vast field, covering near half the States of the Union. So that this singular spectacle is come to be presented—of large bodies of intelligent christians busying themselves intensely with the interests of some millions of men, slaves and masters, and yet all the time adopting not one single practicable plan for giving these people the ordinances of the church, and the benefits of a living ministry. And thus too, whilst some northern ministers have been striving to cast Southern Christians out of the church, Southern mobs have been busy casting northern preachers out of the State,—making together two grievous evils, both of which,

as the friend of religious and of civil freedom, I deplore and condemn.

Let it be said that prejudice and passion have shut out from the Southern States, churches of the class of which I speak, and then the grave question immediately arises, have churches, as such, any right by deviation from the apostolic example, to enkindle passion against themselves, thereby barring the way of the gospel. Paul was ever thankful for an open door for the gospel, and whilst very bold in preaching Christ crucified, he was careful not to raise outside issues. It is, for us who live in this day, an instructive fact, that whilst Paul journeyed continually through an empire filled with slaves, and whilst his life was frequently endangered by those who assailed him for his doctrine, yet he never had any trouble on the score of assaulting the authority of masters, as a thing iniquitous in itself. He spoke to masters plainly, and told them their duty; but in doing this, he never enjoined them to set their slaves free. But as he says himself, "lest the name of God and His doctrine should be blasphemed," he enjoined those under the yoke to "count their own masters worthy of all honor;" and those that had believing masters, he enjoined "not to despise them because they are brethren, but rather do them service because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit."

If it is concerning civil liberty that we are to preach, "then is the offence of the cross ceased."

And let me here pause to say, that I think it impossible for me to utter a stronger remonstrance, than I am now uttering, against the unfortunate practice into which ministers have fallen, of going aside from their commission, to discuss political topics from the pulpit. One of the main points, indeed, of these two discourses, has been to discriminate the kingdom of Christ as spiritual, and to point out those limits which bound the authority of church courts.

If we were to plant churches in Russia, and the Czar should become a communicant, we could enjoin him in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to use his authority in the spirit of love toward his subjects; and if he were guilty of cruelty towards them, we could excommunicate him. But we would have no scriptural warrant whatever, for requiring him to relinquish one particle of the authority he now wields. If his ear were open to us, we could advise him to reconstruct his system, but we could not enjoin him to do it, without ourselves arrogating an au-

thority as church officers, to which we cannot show the shadow of a claim.

To this it may be replied, that slavery is a domestic institution, and not a governmental system. That is granted; yet it inheres in a governmental system, as an integral part of it. It is grafted into the Constitutions and the statute books of the States where it exists. It derives its existence, and its energy, from those instruments. And as a practical fact, we have as little warrant from the example and teachings of the apostles to legislate in church courts against the simple authority of the master, apart from its abuse, as we have to legislate against the simple authority of a despot, apart from its abuse. The most absolute sovereign that can be imagined as having rule over men; one exerting an unlimited control over the bodies of his subjects, would, if a member of this church, be amenable to its Session, for the use made of his power. But the power itself, we would have no right to require him to relinquish. And though it is conceded that slavery is not in itself a governmental system, yet it so far partakes of a governmental nature, that it is manifest from the example and teachings of Paul, that the authority of masters like that of absolute despots, is not in itself to be questioned by church courts, but only the use which masters may make of this authority. But whether this example of Paul arose from the fact that slavery partakes in some limited degree of a governmental nature or not, yet the example and associated teachings remain the same; and the limits of *our duty* and *our right*, as officers of the church, none the less explicitly defined.

Now, whilst the Presbyterian church, after repeated, and careful, and I may say intense examination of the whole question, has refrained from asserting any right to demand of masters in Christ's name, to set their servants free, yet it has never dreamed of relinquishing its full right to oversee its membership in the matter of their conduct towards their domestics. For church courts, within their scriptural bounds, we claim a full authority. And it is their duty to urge masters as the heads of families, to use their best talents and their most prayerful endeavors for the advancement of their children and servants in knowledge, religion, and happiness, thus becoming the imitators of Christ, "who though in the form of God," made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and in that form, *died for His household.*

Now this I say, brethren, the gospel of Christ is the great power of God. It is destined to sweep through this sin-ruined world, resuscitating it, modifying its evils, and gradually removing them. But do you not see, that if it win its way through the world, it must move on after the manner of Christ's own wisdom? If we would carry it through the world, we must follow the example of Christ and His apostles. We must speak as they spake. We must lay upon men no heavier burdens than they laid upon them. We must not make stricter exactions than the Son of God, and Paul His servant, made. If we do, men will not hear us. They will turn from us. Paul went into slave regions and founded churches. Now if we go into such regions, and raise a test of church membership which the apostle never raised, do you not see that we lay a bar—a strong, heavy bar—right across the way of the gospel?

These reflections have an immediate and most interesting connection with the practical work of spreading the gospel through the Slave States of our land. It must now, on all hands, be conceded by intelligent Christians, that if the slaves attain to ultimate freedom, it must be through their gradual elevation in mind and character. And for this end the gospel is indisputably both the wisdom and the power of God. And this gospel, manifestly, can be carried to them only through their masters. So that after all that has been said, the true hope of the negro now lies in the Christianization both of the master and of the slave. Upon this point, let me read you some extracts from Henry Ward Beecher. I may say of Mr. Beecher, that when I receive his views on an any subject, I do it with circumspection. But in PARTS of this sermon from which I am about to quote, he has spoken with much common sense—I may say with much wisdom. He has been an experimenter too, as he himself intimates, in the use of various endeavors for benefitting the negroes. Listen now to his matured judgment touching the matter, when looking at it simply from a PRACTICAL STAND POINT:

In the sermon published in the issue of the *Independent*, Nov. 3, 1859, Mr. Beecher says: "The breeding of discontent amongst the bondmen of our land is not the way to help them. Whatsoever gloomy thoughts the slave's own mind may brood, we are not to carry disquiet to him, from without. If I could have my way, every man on the globe should be a free man and at once. But since they cannot

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be, will not be for ages, is it best that bitter discontent should be inspired in them, or Christian quietness and patient waiting?

. And my experience—and I have had some experience in this matter—is, that men who tamper with slaves and incite them, are not themselves to be trusted. They are not honest men, unless they are fanatical. If they have their reason, they usually have lost their conscience. I never will trust such men with money, nor place any confidence in them whatsoever. I do not know why it is so, but my experience has taught me that men who do such things are crafty, and come forth from such tampering, unreliable men. Conspirators the world over, are bad men. And if I were in the South—and I think I have the reputation there of being a tolerably stout abolitionist—I should, not from fear of the master, but from the most deliberate sense of the injurious effects of it to the slaves, never by word, nor sign, nor act, do anything to excite discontent among those in slavery.

If you wish to work for the enfranchisement of the African, seek to make him a better man. Teach him to be an obedient servant, and an honest, true, Christian man. That man whom Christ first makes free, has a better chance to be civilly free than any other. To make a slave morose, fractious, disobedient and unwilling to work, is the way to defer his emancipation.

. The Pauline treatment is the most direct road to liberty. No part of the wisdom of the New Testament seems to me more divinely wise than Paul's directions to those in slavery. They are the food that servants need now at the South, everywhere the world over. If I lived in the South, I should preach these things to slaves, while preaching on masters' duties to those who hold them. I should do it with a firm conviction that so I should advance the day of their liberty."

Now it is this Pauline doctrine which Mr. Beecher so highly commends, and which to his mind bears pre-eminently the stamp of divine wisdom—'tis this exact doctrine that has regulated the line of action of the Presbyterian church, with regard to slaves and their masters, for more than fifty years.

It is in the spirit of this Pauline doctrine that the testimony of her courts has been rendered, as any man may see, who will take the trouble to examine the digest of acts of the Assembly. Numbers of her minis-

ters, now laboring in slave States, are avowed emancipationists. The difference is, they do not regard the master as committing sin simply in holding slaves, but believe that he may, as a steward for God, do much good in that relation. They do not regard themselves as church officers, as possessed of a function for legislating against the authority of masters, whilst they do hold that, as overseers, they are in duty bound to exhort masters, with parents, to labor for the good of their households. Dr. Robert J. Breckenridge, a man known here by reputation, is at this hour laboring as teacher of theology in the heart of Kentucky; yet he has been a gradual emancipationist from earliest manhood. He was associated with the first friends of colonization who stood up twenty five or thirty years ago with Henry Clay at their head. When a convention was called some years since to amend the Constitution of Kentucky, acting as a citizen, he offered for the Convention upon the question of engrafting upon the amended instrument a clause securing the gradual emancipation of the negroes. A near kinsman of my family, himself a large slaveholder, offered at the same time, and upon the same issue. I voted for him, and would do so again as often as the circumstances should be reproduced. And thus, scattered here and there through the South, we have converted men and women, who sincerely wish, first, the elevation, and then, the emancipation of the slave race; whilst at the same time they DECISIVELY DENY that church courts have any scriptural authority to effect this emancipation by use of authority, even in a single case.

In the development of Christ's life within the church, and in securing its further penetration into all departments of the world's existence, there is a most solemn and weighty responsibility devolved upon church officers. They hold the keys of the visible kingdom. Discipline is, therefore, to be administered by them most carefully. It is not to be administered by immature and rash persons. Not by novices, but by elders, selected for their gravity, their prudence, their knowledge of the scriptures. And these elders may not presume to administer discipline under the dictates of their own impulses simply, but as stewards, must bound their action strictly by the apostolic injunction and example. In all things we are, in God's house, TO CLING TO THE SCRIPTURES. I believe in using discipline under some circumstances. But how easy were it by an unwise and unscriptural discipline to alienate one-half of the families of any church in this

town? And on a larger scale, how easy by such course were it to alienate the affections of multitudes of families in a whole region? Discipline must be strictly conformed to the apostolic injunction and example, or else it becomes A BAR TO THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF CHRIST'S LIFE, and the further subjugation of the nations by grace.

Now as we have said, Christ has adopted his own method for the cure of the evils of this world. He has lodged certain functions in governments, and certain functions in the church. And it is the duty of the church to confine itself to the exercise of its legitimate functions. As an individual and a citizen, I may have many thoughts and desires touching the future civil destiny of the negroes. I trust I am not indifferent to their national freedom. But as an officer in Christ's house, I can exert no authority for the termination of slavery. And the attempt to exert this illegitimate authority, would inevitably, to that extent, bar the progress of the gospel, and cause the name of God and His doctrine "to be blasphemed"—the very evil which Paul deprecated. Christ has not warranted me, as a church officer, to require any communicant to set his slaves free to-day, next year, or the next century. I may advise him to do it, if I think it best, but I may not without contracting guilt, enjoin him to do it. In my official capacity, I may go the full length of my commission; but if I go beyond it, I am myself become a tyrant over the conscience of Christ's household. There is a broad margin for advice, rebuke, exhortation, and discipline. I know not whether slavery is going to last fifty years, or five hundred years; but as long as it does last, I am to exhort masters to "render to their servants that which is just and equal;" and to exhort servants under the yoke, that they "count their own masters worthy of all honor." And if these injunctions are seriously violated by either party, we may use discipline for such violation. But if we go beyond this, we at once leave the region where we are at liberty under ordination vows, to speak with all authority, and enter a region where we are at liberty only to advise and persuade. The man must, to-day, or fifty years hence, judge for himself, before God, whether he shall set his slaves free at all or not; and if so, under what circumstances he is to set them free. The rule of order in God's house does not vary with the varying phases of national exigency. If so, it were a sandbank, in which no enduring pillar of the faith could be planted.

Were I a farmer in the South, with any number of servants under my control, I should deem it a duty to labor for their improvement, with an eye to the eventual freedom of the race. Were my pastor to aid and stimulate my zeal in this matter, by advice and exhortation; were he to enkindle my flagging energies by timely rebuke, I would accept it all, and thank him for his faithfulness. But should he go beyond this, and undertake to enjoin it with authority upon my conscience to free my slaves to-day, next year, or at any specified time, not approved by my own judgment, I should reply, that the matter was foreign from his office as a steward in the church. And if he should persist in this ill-advised abuse of his pastoral function, I should be forced to construe his conduct as intrusive and tyrannical, and to treat it as such.

There are two points that occur here, which I have not time to discuss in full, but which must not be passed in silence. It is sometimes said that the gospel is not preached in its purity in the South. It may be true that in the present state of the public mind, the ministers of our church have need of an increased and discriminating wisdom, in order rightly and successfully to enforce upon masters the special duties devolving upon them in that relation. And some it may be, for aught I know, shirk their duty in this regard. But as to the gospel as Christ spoke it, as Paul uttered it, in all the broad range of its grand doctrines, its sublime hopes, and its heavenly precepts, that man is ignorant of the southern branch of the church, who affirms that it is not preached there. Some of the brightest lights of the age are now shining there; and some of the most faithful of Christ's witnesses are now preaching Sabbath after Sabbath to masters and servants. It is not suitable for brethren and countrymen to indulge in invidious distinctions. My address is specially to the members of my own flock. I have hesitated before speaking of any other denomination; and in what I have concluded to say, I wish to avoid the spirit of censoriousness. I have personal friends here, who hail from New England. There is much in the character of that people of which, as an American, I am proud, and as a Christian, grateful to God. But let me say, there are portents here and there along the theological horizon of New England, which no lover of sound doctrine can contemplate without pain. In my humble judgment, an influential class of the descendants of the Puritans, have in

late years occupied themselves in the study and the pulpit, too little with the central doctrines of the cross, and too much with themes of secondary importance. It is my conviction that the great doctrines of the cross are at this hour in far less danger of subversion in the southern churches, than in New England.* Negative theology—that hydra-headed monster—would to God it were slain! Negative theology, which has in late days vigorously assailed parts of New England, has made little progress at the South. The great doctrines which pertain to the atonement and covenant in Christ, are there, at least in our church, steadfastly held.

Again, it is sometimes said that all Christian slaveholders do not discharge their duty towards their servants, in respect to their instruction. This is unhappily true, notwithstanding the warm exhortations of Synods and Assemblies on the subject. But then, who is there that does his whole duty in any relation? Have you not called me to live here for the express purpose, in part, of exhorting you each week to break off your sins and do your duty? And yet are not some of you up to this hour, making very slow work with the great business of self-reformation, and thorough devotion to Christ? We cannot draw a line through the land, and say all on one side shall be perfect masters and mistresses, under pain of excision, whilst those on the other side may be imperfect as husbands and wives, and parents and neighbors, and yet suffer no excision.

But that our church through the South is not unmindful of its duty to the slaves, in the degree that some would imply, is well known to all who have been there; and may be well known to all who will examine our church records.

But some will ask, what shall we do then touching this whole matter. To politicians I have not one word to say in the premises. I leave them to do their own thinking. But as to Christians, in their relation to Christ's church, I would warn them to bear the ark without touching it? He that carrieth coals, let him carry them in a consecrated shovel, lest his unhallowed shovel be burned, and the coals fall

NOTE.—Many of the churches of New England have been disposed to insist with peculiar earnestness, that the Presbyterian Church purify its action touching slavery. The question has thus been naturally suggested, have those churches throughout, shown a corresponding zeal in behalf of those grand fundamental doctrines upon which the hopes and peace of the church are dependant. Upon this point it must be conceded that every man is entitled to his opinion. Above, I have given mine.

abroad, and fill God's house with the smoke and flames of fanaticism. Reflect thoroughly upon Christ's plan for healing the maladies of this world, of which slavery in its worst form, is but one. Examine well the law of order for Christ's house. Remember distinctly that the gospel was first preached in a slaveholding empire; meditate upon Paul's position, reflect upon his conduct, ponder his words where he comes in contact with slavery; penetrate the spirit of his inspired example, and try to compass his sublime faith in the cross of Christ as "the wisdom of God and the power of God." Let us sweep back the curtaining film, and discern anew the glory, and the immense moral energy there is in such a fact as "God manifest in the flesh," and dying in agony for *his rebellious servants*. Do you speak to me of the progressiveness of religion? Then try to-night to comprehend anew, that this doctrine of the cross has been cast like leaven into the world's great, wicked, turbulent heart, there to strive and there to conquer, until that heart is subjugated through the force of this unutterable love of Christ. O! if a wild anarchy should sweep over this fair region, blighting every fair hope that now gladdens the patriot; if our institutions were all buried in one common ruin, and our civilization rubbed like the pattern of a flower from existence, and if my frail life were spared to behold the wreck, I would go forth amid the wide desolation, binding this gospel to my bleeding heart, and breathing its life giving truths from my lips. It has ere now called nations from out their graves, and its glorious triumphs are not half ended.

Yet to Christians, let me say that it is better and more glorious every way, to bring one man into the liberty of the sons of God, than to bring twenty men into the transient possession of civil liberty. Citizens die and perish by scores, but the children of God never die. Free citizens are many of them slaves of the devil, but numerous bondmen are the free heirs of God. Many in this land, amid their liberty, are sowing to the flesh, that they may reap corruption, whilst many amid their bonds are sowing to the spirit, that they may reap life everlasting. The primary aim of Christ's religion, is to *free souls*. The freeing of bodies is only incidental and subordinate. See then the point upon which as Christians, we are to expend our chief energies, if we would imitate the apostles. It is to preach Christ. Seek to penetrate the souls of masters and of servants with the love of Christ,



and the love of each other. You have already destroyed the rigors of slavery where this is done. Introduce the love of Christ, and you have initiated emancipation. O! could we as instruments penetrate the souls of men with this expansive power, then I would say, come let us go to the grave and sleep in peace, for liberty will follow. As the birdling issues from the egg, and presently mounts toward heaven with a song, so surely, inevitably, liberty rises to life within a nation impregnated throughout with the love of Christ. To plant the germs of this love is the great work about which our church is busying itself. And if any man shall call me from this high vocation, to preach abolition, I will reply like Nehemiah from the wall, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down."

When the pear is ripe it will fall, but green pears, what are they worth, though shaken with violence from the tree? A nation of Christian masters and Christian slaves would soon come to a good understanding, without the interference of political preachers.

Under the sternest sense of duty our Assembly has refrained from the invasion of Christ's prerogative, lest thereby they should hinder the expansion of Christ's life within His church, and check the progress of its influence over the nations.

I have now briefly to vindicate as scriptural, one sentiment which I have uttered, and I have done. I said on a recent occasion, "when I look through the events of history, when I open the bible and read there the heart of Christ, and then turn to the survey of African slavery in this country, my heart rejoices at the good which God has already worked out through its agency, and the far greater good which I believe He is still to work out, for the negro race."

I firmly believe in Gods sovereignty over nations, and his particular providence in their affairs. Whom he will he casteth down, and whom he will he exalteth. There is no truth in scripture that can be more clearly established than that God is ever subordinating the agencies of man, both good and evil, to the achievement of his own ends, and the advancement of his own glory. And is there a man who really thinks that African slavery is so wholly a damnable thing, that even the Lord of glory cannot subjugate it; and harness it, and make it, with despotisms and monarchies and republics, a means of grace to the world? If there is such a man, I do not wish to think with him. I wish none of his gloomy readings of the world's current history, which

to my eye is tinged everywhere with the tokens of a brighter day.

What think you of the planting of the cross on Calvary? You count it a crime. Yet what hope have you for eternity that is *worth a straw*, that is not sprung from that cross? The greatest crime ever committed on this earth, hath flooded it with glory and with hope. Now this hath been the wondrous method of our King throughout history. The wicked acts of Satan and his servants, have again and again given rise to wonderful developments of Gods's good pleasure for the redemption of nations from barbarism. And who shall hinder him from the further pursuit of his own plan?

Wicked men wrested the negroes from their homes, and sold them into slavery. But amid their bonds, God hath raised up many of his own children to rule them with kindness, and to teach them civilization and christianity. I doubt whether any nation, as a nation, ever made faster progress, when just emerging from barbarism, than have the negroes in this country. But yesterday, counting by the days of a nation's life, they were heathen, without God and without hope in the world. To-day they are under bonds and at school. In many cases it proves a rough school and a hard school. But yet they are steadily learning agriculture, the mechanic arts, and in a degree, laws and civil polity. Above all they are hearing the gospel of Christ, numbers of them hear it—and I speak of what I know to be true—numbers of them hear it in greater purity and embrace it with a more genuine faith, than do sundry congregations of white people, in the most cultivated sections of the land. Numbers of them have died, in the triumphs of the Christian's hope, and other numbers are being prepared by the grace of God for the same happy issue. Numbers are already freed, and have gone back to Africa enriched with the best gifts granted by God to man on this earth. They have gone back with the torch of heavenly knowledge, to kindle, as we hope, throughout that continent, a light at which kings shall arise and rejoice.

Many families of these people, are in the hands of masters who are oppressive—who fear not God. But the gospel—Christ's great remedy, is steadily pushing its way through the South; and for my part, I will trust in that gospel as the power of God for the amelioration of their lot. Can you not recall the eloquent words which fell some months since from the lips of an elderly minister, standing in this place. They were to this effect: "The love of Christ is more pow-

erful than any passion. Name the passion which the glory of the cross cannot subdue and cast out? In naming it, you utter a slander upon that glorious thing which is 'the power of God.' The love of money—the love of power—the love of ease and luxury have times without number gone down before its influence; its efficacy to day is not one whit diminished."

Send me as missionary amid the homes of the most reckless and avaricious planters in the country. I will say no word to them about relinquishing their authority, for I have no such commission. But I will reiterate the story of the cross. I will strive to illustrate to them that love displayed by a King dying on the cross for his guilty servants. I will point my moral with that wondrous story, and thereby strive to win them to the *glory* of laboring for the good of their servants. Nor would I labor without hope. I would look confidently for crowns of rejoicing, from amongst these men, and their wives, and their children, and their servants. And with the entrance of the gospel, there would inevitably come the softening of the rigors of bondage. Do you in the open day profess your faith in the melting power of the cross, and yet disbelieve this?

For my part, though the world be turned upside down, I will not slander the providences of my God. I have not spoken from the steps of the Capitol, but from the pulpit. Then Mount Zion is the standpoint. Eternity furnishes the horizon. The spiritual and eternal kingdom of Christ is the subject matter of meditation and review. When then I see a providence through which kings and priests are born in companies into the kingdom; when I see a providence through which the sheep are called, and the heirs of glory brought in, what shall I do? If I keep silence, the very stones will cry out. Then let the blind grope, and the despondent sigh, but "let the inhabitants of the rock sing; yea, let them sing."

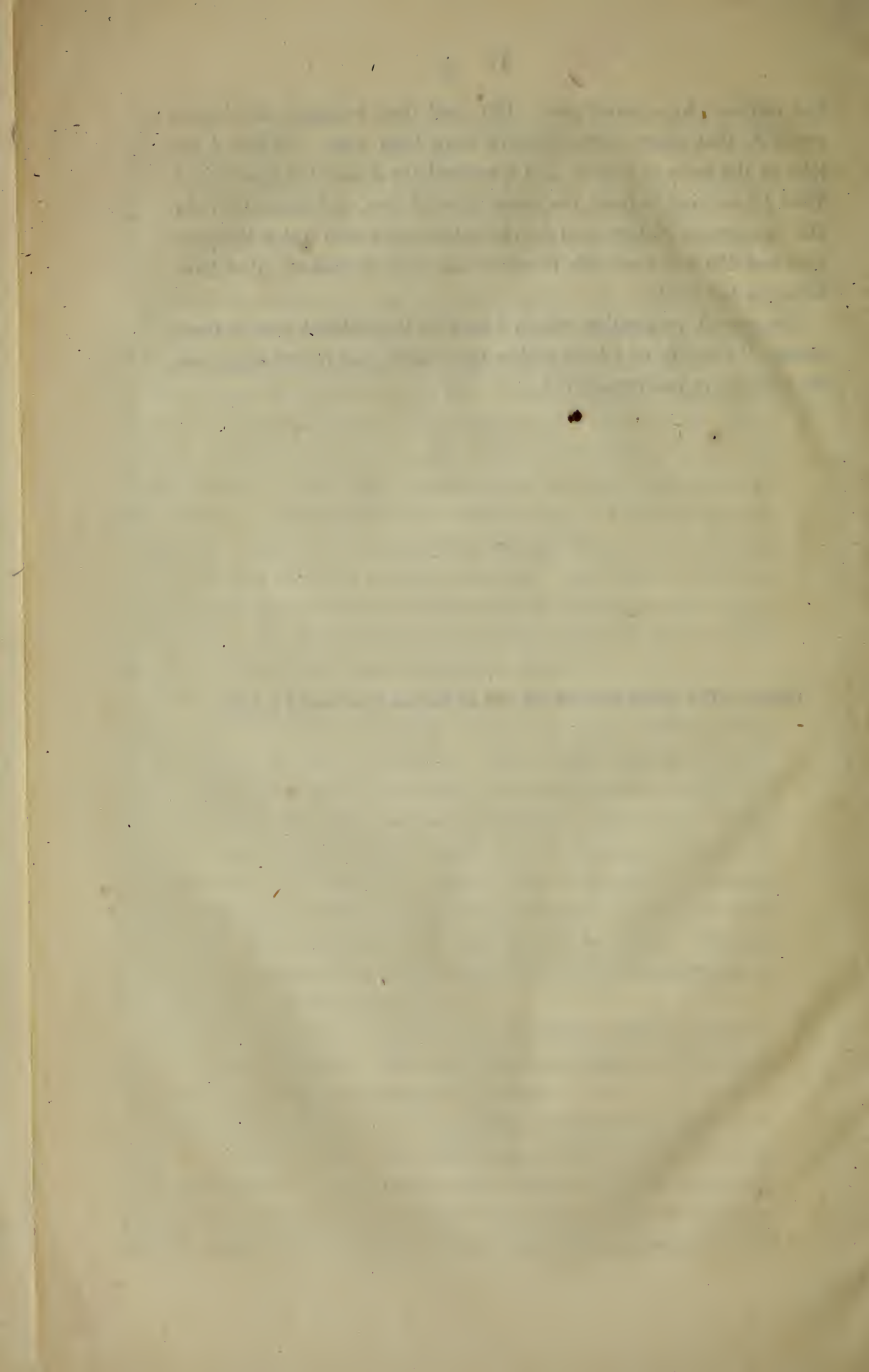
In all this, I do not lose sight of the wickedness which men commit. I do not palliate it. The Lord shall be glorified in His ways, and every man judged according to his work.

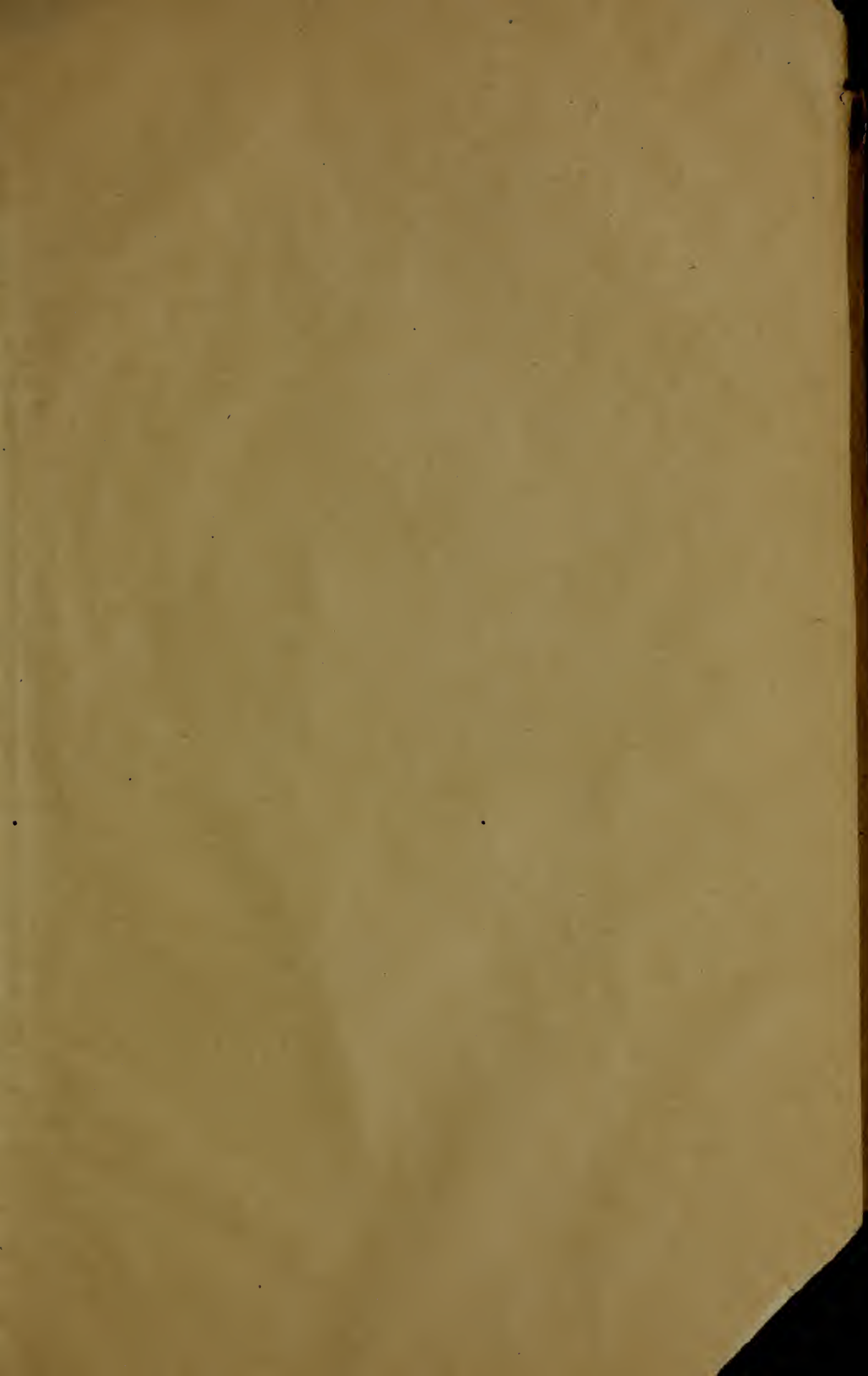
I do not ask what some other imaginable providence might have effected. I have nothing to do with imaginary providences, but with actual providences. Here amid the real events of this real world, and under the sovereignty of that sceptre whose sway extends through the universe, I find a race enslaved. They have been enslaved, in the

first instance, by criminal acts. But amid their bondage, God has so wrought, that many heirs of glory have been born. When I rejoice in the cross of Christ, do I commend the Jews that slew him? Then let me sing in quiet the songs which I love, and praise God for His footsteps in history, and for the golden light with which His presence and His grace are able to relieve the darkest shadows that have fallen on our earth.

The second proposition which I read on last Sabbath was in these words: "The life of Christ within the church, and its influence over the nations, IS PROGRESSIVE."

ERROR.—The fourth verse of the text of Sermon 1, is from Ps. 11-3.





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